

REMARKS

Applicants and the undersigned thank Examiner Bomar for his careful review of this application. Consideration of the present application in view of the remarks and amendments to the claims is respectfully requested.

By the present communication, claims 6-9, 113, 115, 118, 123 and 154 have been cancelled, claims 111 and 116 have been amended and claims 1-5, 10-110, 112, 114, 117, 119-122, and 124-153 have been maintained in their original form. Thus claims 1-5, 10-112, 114, 116-117, 119-122, and 124-153 are pending and under active prosecution in the present application.

Claims 1-153 were subject to election of species under PCT Rule 13.1.

- Species I, Figures 1-2b wherein the tubular sleeve has an internal flange
- Species II, Figures 3a-3b wherein the tubular sleeve has sealing members for sealing the interface between the sleeve and the tubular members
- Species III, Figures 4a-4b wherein there is an external seal on the tubular sleeve for sealing between the sleeve and a casing or wellbore
- Species IV, Figures 5a-5b wherein the tubular sleeve is made of a non-metallic material
- Species V, Figures 6a-6d wherein the tubular sleeve contains radial slots or openings
- Species VI, Figures 7a-7e wherein retaining rings cooperate with sloped surfaces on the two tubular members to lock the sleeve to the tubular members
- Species VII, Figures 8a-8g wherein the upper and lower ends of the sleeve are crimped to sloped surfaces of the two tubular members
- Species VIII, Figures 9a-9e wherein the sleeve is coupled to the two tubular members with toothed resilient retaining rings
- Species IX, Figures 12a-12e wherein the sleeve has an external flange
- Species X, Figures 13a-13d wherein the two tubular members are attached to the tubular sleeve, but are threaded to one another

Applicant hereby elects Species I, corresponding to Figures 1-2b wherein the tubular sleeve has an internal flange, for examination. Species I reads on claims 1-5, 10-112, 114, 116-117, 119-122, and 124-153. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the unelected species in a divisional or continuation application. Consideration and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.

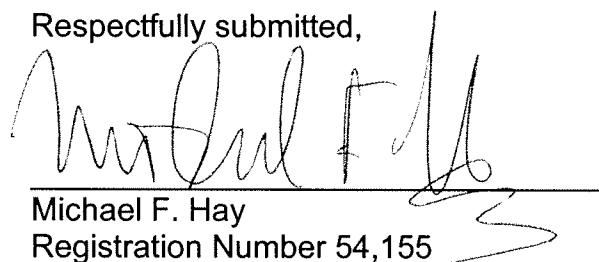
CONCLUSION

The foregoing is submitted as a full and complete Response to the Election Requirement mailed September 18, 2007. Applicants have made a diligent effort to advance the prosecution of the application by submitting arguments in support of the patentability of claims 1-153. Applicants have not acquiesced to any rejection and reserves the right to address the patentability of any additional claim features in the future. In view of the above, consideration of the rejections and allowance of claims 1-5, 10-112, 114, 116-117, 119-122, and 124-153 are respectfully requested.

As the one-month statutory period for reply expires on October 18, 2007, this Response is therefore considered timely filed and no fees are believed to be due. However, should the Commissioner deem any fees as being due, including any fees for any extensions of time, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to debit said fees from, or to credit any overpayments to, USPTO Deposit Account Number 50-3786, Reference No. 14147.105093.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at the number listed below if a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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